



DIVERSITY@WORK

A PUBLICATION OF THE OFFICE OF DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT & EEO, WWW.VA.GOV/DMEEO

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 5

JULY/AUGUST 2004

Q&A

VBA: Expanding Workforce Diversity

In part two of our interview with the VA Under Secretary for Benefits, Daniel L. Cooper talks about diversity and succession planning at VBA.

Q: Secretary Principi has gone on record to say that managers will be responsible for VA meeting its diversity goals. How's VBA supporting this?

VADM Cooper: I fully support Secretary Principi's commitment to meeting VA's diversity goals. I recently issued a policy statement reflecting my personal commitment to diversity in VBA. This policy outlines management's responsibility to ensure we make full use of the opportunities available to develop and expand the diversity of our workforce. A performance element addressing diversity has been incorporated into managers' performance plans. We are also developing and implementing a workforce development plan that contains specific strategies for achieving VA's diversity goals.

More specifically, VBA requires each regional office and Headquarters element to submit an annual report outlining accomplishments in improving employee representation in diverse groups. As part of this report, regional office directors are asked to provide demographics of employees promoted to GS-11, GS-12, and GS-13 positions. If applicable,

directors must include the measures they plan to take to improve areas of underrepresentation. I am confident VBA managers understand our goals and are striving to meet them.

Q: Does VBA have a succession planning effort underway? If so, what does it entail and how is diversity included?

VADM Cooper: Yes, VBA has a Workforce and Succession Plan, which has a diversity component. Over the past 3 years, we have hired or promoted about 1,800 employees into technical positions. Approximately 75 percent of these new technicians are minorities and women. This recruitment effort strengthens our pool of employees from which to develop effective leaders for the future.

A major component of VBA's succession plan is to fill critical management and leadership vacancies that are expected to occur during the next 3 to 4 years. We plan to fill these vacancies with candidates who have participated in a variety of leadership and development programs that VBA offers. With many employees in positions that can lead to senior technical or leadership positions, we anticipate continued improvement in minority and female representation in influential management roles.■

In this issue:

FIELD NOTES News You Can Use	2
WEB SITE SPOTLIGHT National Women's History Museum	2
SPECIAL EMPHASIS What is Reasonable Accommodation?	3
INSIDE STORY Secretary's 15th Annual EEO Award Winners	3
DM&EEO ONLINE	4
CALENDAR	4

CELEBRATE!

Women's Equality Day

VA proudly joins the Nation in celebrating Women's Equality Day on August 26.

The 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote was certified on August 26, 1920. Congress designated this date in 1971 to honor women's continuing efforts toward full equality.

For observance resources, visit

www.va.gov/dmeeo/wed.htm.

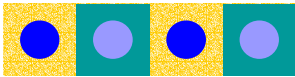
To learn more about VA's Federal Women's Program, contact

Wanda J. Jones at (202) 501-2089 or wanda.jones@mail.va.gov.■



Bookmarks

- **National Hispana Leadership Institute**
www.nhli.org
- **Association on Higher Education and Disability**
www.ahead.org
- **Bay Pines Native American Council**
www.falome.com/na/html
- **American Legacy**
www.americanlegacymag.com
- **American Association of University Women**
www.aauw.org
- **Arab American Institute**
www.aaiusa.org
- **Blinded Veterans Association** www.bva.org



FIELD NOTES

News You Can Use

To join *NewsLink*, our free, weekly electronic news service, send an e-mail to dmeeo@mail.va.gov with SUBSCRIBE NEWS in the subject line. Thanks to our *NewsLink* content partners:

- Asian Diversity Magazine
- Black MBA Magazine
- Business & Legal Reports
- DiversityCareers.com
- Federal Employees News
- FedNews Online
- FindLaw
- Government Executive
- Government Procurement
- HireDiversity.com
- Hispanic Business
- HR Executive Magazine
- Indian Country Today
- Journal of Issues in Nursing
- Linkage, Inc.
- National Org. on Disability
- Newsweek
- National Public Radio
- Pew Hispanic Center
- SHRM
- The Access Board
- Training Media Review
- USAToday.com
- Washingtonpost.com
- Workforce Magazine
- Workindex.com

40th Anniversary of Title VII

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act turns 40 on July 2! The law prohibits employment discrimination for covered employers with 15 or more workers on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, and national origin. While it prohibits any unlawful employment practice, three categories dominate cases filed against employers: disparate treatment, workplace harassment, and retaliation.

► More info: www.eeoc.gov/abouteeoc/40th/panel/



VSSC Update

DM&EEO is posting a new folder for the required EEOC tables on the VISN Support Service Center (VSSC) site under Human Resources. Table 3 shows how VA representation compares to the national 2000 Census Relevant Civilian Labor Force (RCLF) by the new 9 job categories that EEOC is requiring instead of PATCO. Table 6 compares the major occupations in each Administration to the 2000



Census RCLF. This is perhaps VA's first look at how our representation compares to the 2000 Census RCLF. DM&EEO will post the other 26 tables required by EEOC during the next few months.

► More info: <http://vssc.med.va.gov>

Golden Age Games

More than 500 veterans will gather for the Nation's largest sporting event for senior military veterans this month.



The 18th National Veterans Golden Age Games—sponsored by VA, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the Veterans Canteen Service—will take place July 18-23 in Fresno, California. The games enable military veterans, ages 55 and above, to compete in such events as swimming, bicycling, and a pentathlon, among others.

This year, the Games serve as a qualifier for the National Senior Olympics being held next year in Pittsburgh.

► More info: www.va.gov/vetevent/gag/2004

WEB SITE SPOTLIGHT

National Women's History Museum

www.nwhm.org

Content: The National Women's History Museum is a nonpartisan, nonprofit educational organization dedicated to restoring the historic contributions of women to society. The Web site serves as an information center for the museum's activities; a permanent museum is planned for the Mall area in Washington, DC. The site offers news on events, membership, sponsors, and planned exhibits.

Must-see features: The Cyber Museum offers interesting images of the Women's Suffrage Movement and exhibit items such as posters, buttons, banners, and postcards.

Contact info: Full contact information is found at the Talk To Us link.

Accessibility: No information is offered regarding site accessibility for people with disabilities.



For special observance theme information, visit our Web site and select the Calendar link.

SPECIAL EMPHASIS

What is Reasonable Accommodation?

Reasonable accommodation is defined as any change in the work environment or in the way things are customarily done that enables an individual with a disability to enjoy equal employment opportunities. There are three categories of reasonable accommodation:

- Modifications or adjustments to a job application process that enable a qualified applicant with a disability to be considered for a position.
- Modifications or adjustments to the work environment—or to the manner or circumstances under which the position held or desired is customarily performed—that enable a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of that position.
- Modifications or adjustments that enable eligible employees with disabilities to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment as enjoyed by other similarly situated employees without disabilities.

Reasonable accommodation is available to qualified applicants and employees with disabilities and must be provided to qualified employees regardless of whether they work part-time or are considered probationary. Generally, an individual

with a disability must inform his or her employer that an accommodation is needed.

In VA, managers and supervisors have two wonderful tools at their fingertips to provide reasonable accommodation to employees with disabilities. In February 2002, VA signed an Interagency Agreement with the Department of Defense's Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program (CAP). CAP provides reasonable accommodation to individuals with visual, hearing, dexterity and/or cognitive disabilities. The other tool is the Job Accommodation Network (JAN). JAN is a comprehensive service providing accommodation and ADA information for the hiring, training, retention, and career advancement of people with disabilities since 1983.

VA Directive 5975.1 provides information on how to request reasonable accommodation in the Department. But remember: **Communication is the key to a successful request for accommodation.**

For additional information, please visit www.va.gov/dmeeo. ■

INSIDE STORY

Secretary's 15th Annual EEO Award Winners

DM&EEO helps to recognize people and events that contribute to EEO and diversity initiatives.

Each year, the Office coordinates nominations for the Secretary's Annual Equal Employment Opportunity Awards Program, which is the highest recognition given to Department employees who have excelled in promoting or have made significant contributions to VA's EEO Program. Awards consist of a plaque and a cash award.

DM&EEO received 32 nominations for the Secretary's 15th Annual EEO Awards. Here are this year's winners:

- Sherry A. Zahirniak, Human Resources Management Liaison, VA Regional Office, Waco, Texas
- William "Birt" Fraser, Chief, Health Administration Services, VA Medical Center,

Fayetteville, North Carolina

- Richard A. Silver, Director (retired), James A. Haley Veterans Hospital, Tampa, Florida
- Francine C. Fraser, Minority Affairs/Lead EEO Manager, VISN 3, New York, New York
- Rowland A. Christian, Director, VA Regional Office, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Last year's winners included Gary Devansky, Cecelia Franklin, Beverly Kimball, Sam Maze, Judy McKee, Pamela McKinney, and Michelle U'Ren. Jose Coronado received a special leadership award.

For additional information, contact Noemi Pizarro-Hyman at (202) 501-2031. Or visit www.va.gov/dmeeo/eoawards.htm. ■

Diversity@Work

Newsletter published bimonthly by the National Office of Diversity Management and Equal Employment Opportunity. To subscribe or unsubscribe, send an e-mail request to dmeeo@mail.va.gov.

CONTACT US

Mail:

Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of DM&EEO (06)
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Phone:

(202) 501-1970

Fax:

(202) 501-2145

E-mail the Editor:

dmeeo@mail.va.gov

Visit our Web site
for additional staff
e-mail addresses:
www.va.gov/dmeeo

OTHER USEFUL LINKS

Department of Veterans Affairs home
www.va.gov

VA Office of Resolution Management
www.va.gov/orm

VA Office of Human Resources Management
www.va.gov/ohrm

DM&EEO ONLINE



The mission of the Office of DM&EEO is to provide leadership in creating and sustaining a diverse workplace free of discrimination at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Here's a sampling of online tools that can help you promote the employment of veterans, women, minorities, and people with disabilities:

- ▶ National Hispanic Heritage Month resources
- ▶ Online Speakers Bureau
- ▶ EEO laws and regulations

Bookmark our site; we're here to serve you!

2004 DIVERSITY CALENDAR

JULY

Veterans Golden Age Games

July 18-23
Fresno, CA
www.va.gov/opa

Federally Employed Women National Training Program

July 19-23
Nashville, TN
www.few.org

AUGUST

Minority Women's Health Summit

August 12-15
Washington, DC
www.4woman.gov/mwhs

Blacks in Government (BIG) National Training Program

August 16-20
Washington, DC
www.bignet.org

Native American Special Emphasis Program Managers Training

August 17-20
Ellicott City, MD
(520) 629-4960



Coming soon:

SEPTEMBER

National Hispanic Heritage Month

Patriot Day

September 11

Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week

September 14-20
www.nafeo.org/hbcu.html

National POW/MIA Recognition Day

September 19
www.powmiaawareness.com

For more events, visit www.va.gov/dmeeo and select the Calendar link.